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To: Members of the House Committee on Finance
From: Karen Malcolm, Coordinator, Protect Our Healthcare Coalition
Date: March 4, 2021
Re: **SUPPORT the NURSING HOME STAFFING AND QUALITY CARE ACT – H5012**

The Protect Our HealthCare Coalition is a group of leading Rhode Island non-profits and consumer groups with a goal to protect and promote quality, affordable healthcare for all. The Coalition also includes hundreds of community members around the state who support the Coalition's mission.

The already dire situation in our state's nursing homes that has existed for some time has been exacerbated to a deadly level as a result of COVID-19. It is time for the General Assembly to act on policy that begins to address the change that is needed in our long-term care system. That is why the members of the Protect Our Healthcare Coalition **support the Nursing Home Safe Staffing and Quality Care Act (H5012).**

Ensuring quality healthcare for every Rhode Islander is a top priority for the Coalition. Understaffing is one of the underlying causes of infection and neglect in nursing homes. Understaffed institutions mean that staff is unable to give each resident adequate attention, and overworked and stressed staff increases the risk of mistakes. **Studies prove that residents who live in understaffed facilities are at a higher risk of malnutrition, weight loss, bedsores, falls, and infections.**

(<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2594332/?page=1>)

We support the Act's measures to:

- Increase the **minimum standard to 4.1 hours of resident care per day**, the federal recommendation for quality care;
- **Secure funding to raise wages** to recruit and retain a stable, qualified workforce; and
- Invest in **needed training and skills enhancement for caregivers** to provide the best care possible for patients with complex healthcare needs.

The status of staffing in Rhode Island's nursing homes is simply unacceptable. We urge you to pass the Nursing Home Staffing and Quality Care Act.

Thank you.

Protect Our Healthcare Coalition partners include: Economic Progress Institute, Mental Health Association RI, RI NOW, RI Parent Information Network, RI Health Center Association, NAACP Providence Branch, United Way of Rhode Island, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, RI Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty, SEIU Rhode Island Council, Foster Forward, RI Coalition for the Homeless, Rhode Island Working Families Party, Mental Health Recovery Coalition, Oasis Wellness Center, RI Community Food Bank, Substance Use & Mental Health Leadership Council, Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families, HousingWorks RI, Rhode Island Organizing Project (RIOP), Thundermist Health Center

c/o the Economic Progress Institute, 600 Mt. Pleasant Avenue, Building #9, Providence, RI 02908